SF MUNI, NYC Workers Fight War Contract Cuts, pages 3, 5, 8

79 MAY DAY March Ended Nazi Reign in Marquette Park, page 2

challenge

JOIN THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

May 12, 2004 Volume 38 #34 Suggested Donation $.50 www.plp.org

MARCH ON MAY DAY!

This May Day, the international working class is marching amid endless imperialist wars, racist/fascist oppression and mass unemployment and poverty. More than ever, we fight for workers' power and a communist world without any bosses. Electing Kerry or Bush won't change the nature of this beast.

With the bosses' election campaign circus in full swing, the White House and Pentagon are drawing up plans to slaughter thousands more Iraqis and sacrifice more U.S. working-class soldiers in the city of Fallujah. Meanwhile, forces in both Democratic and Republican parties want a complete overhaul of Bush's tactics for conquering Iraq and its oil treasure.

Both parties agree that control of Persian Gulf oil is crucial to ensuring U.S. world domination for generations to come. They are all willing to murder millions of workers in order to seize, hold, and profit from Iraqi oil and establish permanent military bases there.

The main electoral parties serve the capitalists. The squabbling between Democrats and Republicans, and now among Republicans, over how to win this war, provides valuable lessons about the nature of political parties and elections under the profit system.

The 2004 presidential election offers workers a "choice" over how the bosses can rule the world and oppress us at home. Their agenda calls for unending war abroad and increasing police state terror at home. We reject this choice. No capitalist party can represent our interests. Only a mass, international PLP, committed to destroying the profit system with communist revolution can meet our aspirations. This process will take many years, but it is the only answer to all the horrors of capitalism.

Political in-fighting among the rulers has sharpened over Bush's failures in Iraq. Theodore Roosevelt IV, a managing director at Lehman Brothers Wall St. investment house, has a Republican pedigree a mile long. This great-grandson of President Teddy Roosevelt — the butcher of Cuba and the Philippines — spoke at the 2000 Republican convention that nominated Bush. On April 14, he turned up at a Kerry fund-raiser saying he was "distressed with the national leadership of the Republican Party." He was joined by a chorus of like-minded Republicans, all pillars of Eastern Establishment finance or commerce (New York Observer, 4/26), and part of a campaign spearheaded by the New York Times and the liberals to dump the Bush crowd.

Ruling the world is a serious, expensive business. Wars require huge sums of money. The rulers must discipline the working class into sacrificing, fighting and dying. The economy must be transformed into a true wartime operation. A police state requires a vastly more complex, centralized infrastructure than the half-baked models proposed by Bush and his two-bit Bible-thumping Nazi Attorney General Ashcroft. The liberals want to increase the speed, ruthlessness and efficiency of imperialist war and fascism.

On April 22, Senator/Vietnam War criminal John McCain (R-Arizona) warned the Council on Foreign Relations that the price "of failure in Iraq [is] unacceptably high." He criticized the Bush tax cuts, demanding, "discipline and sacrifice…at home." Iraq must be made safe for oil investment, and McCain-Roosevelt-Kerry fear that Bush's policies will never achieve that. They want the White House to crack down on bosses who won't cooperate.

As for "discipline and sacrifice" from the working class, the Kerry crowd complains that Bush has failed to provide enough of it. McCain wants to deploy "at least another full division [in Iraq], and probably more." (Speech to Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., April 22) Kerry has called for 40,000 more troops.

Times columnist Paul Krugman writes that Bush "wasn't willing to spend enough on security." He complains about "cronyism and corruption [as] major factors in Iraq's downward spiral," and warns that the war will cost "$50-

continued on page 2

REAL REASONS FOR U.S. WAR ON IRAQ

• CONTROL OIL

• MILITARY BASES

• EURO VS. DOLLAR

Amid all the phony "reasons" the Bush administration has given for invading Iraq — Saddam Hussein's possession of (non-existent) weapons of mass destruction, his (non-existent) links to al Qaeda, and his assault on human rights (supported by the U.S. during the Iran-Iraq war) — Bob Woodward's book "Plan of Attack" emphasizes some new ones: "Bush's conviction that he is a servant of God and history, chosen to liberate Iraq [and] bring democracy to the Middle East."

U.S. imperialism has never brought "democracy" anywhere. Exactly the opposite: it has supported, and often created, virtually every fascist dictatorship in existence.

CHALLENGE has long maintained that the Iraq invasion had everything to do with the need to, (1) control and profit from the supply of Mid-East oil and prevent a shift to its trading in euros rather than the dollar; and (2) establish a more definitive military presence in that region, ever since its puppet, the Shah of Iran, was overthrown and its base in Saudi Arabia was becoming increasingly shaky.

Much of this is confirmed in an article by William Pfaff (International Herald Tribune, 4/1) headlined, "Were U.S. Business, Military Interests At Heart of Iraq Invasion?" He reports that Lt.-Col. Karen Kwiakowski, a now retired U.S. Army career officer and an analyst for the Special Plans Office says that group "was…the driving force inside the government for the invasion."

Pfaff says Kwiakowski told him, "The reasons for an invasion…had little to do with weapons of mass destruction or Saddam Hussein's abuse of human rights.... They were fundamentally based on the assumption that U.N. sanctions against Iraq were increasingly unsustainable…international[ly]. . . . Therefore, the sanctions were likely soon to be lifted, despite anything the U.S. might do."

Since the U.S. led the sanctions and maintained the no-fly zone over (and bombed) Iraq, Saddam "would…continue to consider it an enemy and would lock American business out of contracts and investment in what was potentially the richest country in the Middle

continued on page 2

79 May Day March Ended Nazi Reign in Marquette Park

The 1979 May Day march in Chicago's Marquette Park was the culmination of several communist-led, anti-racist actions. PLP rallied, demonstrated and beat down the Nazis in their own headquarters (see CHALLENGE, 4/14) in response to racist attacks on black workers living near or working in Marquette Park. The May Day march, Chicago's largest and most significant since PLP revived the tradition in 1971, finally did the Nazis in.

From the start, the rulers tried to prevent the march. They said we needed insurance, although buying it was impossible. They said we couldn't march past a hospital, couldn't march on busy 71st St., and couldn't use a park as a starting point. We were determined to have our march and fought them every step of the way until we won a legal and political victory.

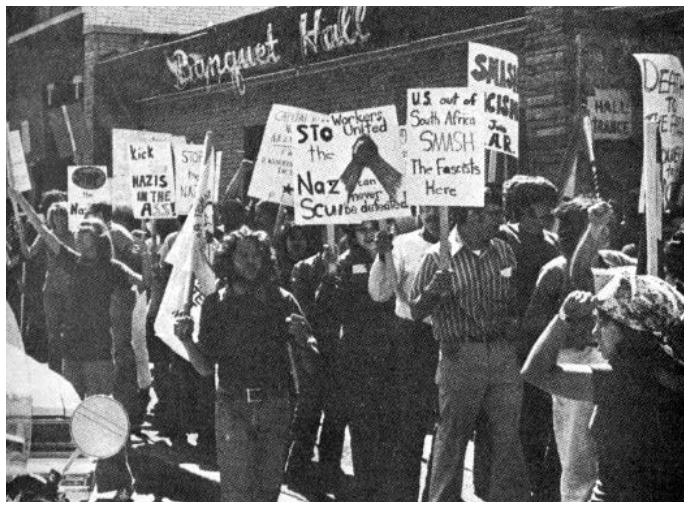
As PLP built for the march in the factories, hospitals, schools and communities, thousands of Midwest workers and students discussed and debated the causes of racism, the need for revolutionary violence, the meaning of free speech under capitalism and the feasibility of communism. We spent many hours with residents of the predominately-black Englewood neighborhood adjoining Marquette Park. Many had been victimized by the racists and supported our boldness and communist vision.

On April 27, 700 black, Latin and white workers and students from Chicago, Detroit, Minneapolis, Madison, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Columbus, Ohio gathered in Ogden Park in Englewood. It seemed as if the entire neighborhood had turned out. Many agreed to march with us while others feared we "wouldn't make it back alive." The skies were gray as we linked arms and began marching.

At the front our security squad was outfitted in red hats, wearing large-buckled garrison belts. We came to a bridge with dozens of people standing on the overpass. The head of our security team told the cops, "We can get them off the bridge ourselves or you can get them off." In minutes, the overpass was clear.

Soon we crossed Western Avenue into the Marquette Park neighborhood, disciplined and ready, with anti-racist and communist chants. Several comrades infiltrated the crowds. One woman overheard a conversation between two young racists. "Should we attack them?" asked one. "I don't think that's a good idea," replied the other, "What do you think those belts are for?"

As we approached Marquette Park, chanting with red flags raised high, the sun began to shine through the clouds. The rally inside the park was short and dramatic. No Nazis were seen that day, even though they had called the PLP office warning, "You will be destroyed!" Instead, it was the end of that particular group of Nazis.



As we marched back across Western Avenue a spontaneous roar sprung from the march. Back in Englewood, we received a hero's welcome and ate the best cold fried chicken and warm pop we'd ever had in our lives.

Six months later, Nazi leader Frank Collins was in jail for molesting young boys and the Nazi office was closed. As a result of the march, charges against Susana Finley — who was injured and arrested for several felonies in the 1978 raid on the Nazi office — were dropped. For many years afterwards, we held integrated baseball games in Marquette Park, with plenty of bats.

The neighborhood has been integrated for years, but the struggle against racism continues. PLP has been involved in fighting racist attacks on Marquette Park's Arab and Muslim residents, resulting from the racist rulers' "War on Terror." The 1979 May Day march was a victory against racism, but not the end of the war. Only communist revolution will destroy the imperialist war-makers and the racist terrorists, from the White House to Marquette Park. This May Day, we recommit ourselves to this struggle!✪

Democrats and Republicans, Twin Warmakers

continued from front page

70 billion over the next two years." (NYT, 4/23)

The Times' influential Sunday editorial page (4/25) calls Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, "dismally wrong" about everything in Iraq except the initial estimate that a small force could easily overthrow Saddam Hussein. Ominously, the Times admits that the U.S. is in Iraq for the long haul and calls for dramatic increases in troop strength, "at least 50,000 in the short term."

MASS MURDER WORSE THAN HITLER

Scratch a liberal and you'll find a fascist. In the 20th Century, the Rockefeller-led Eastern Establishment surpassed Hitler in mass murder for conquest and profit — from Cuba, the Philippines and Panama in the early 1900s to Siberia in 1919 to Nicaragua (15 invasions) to atomic- and fire-bombing hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians in 1945 to Korea to Guatemala to Haiti to the Dominican Republic to the Congo to Lebanon to Colombia to Vietnam to Chile to Kosovo to Gulf War I to Afghanistan and 10 years of bombing Iraq with depleted uranium, a long-term killer. The 21st Century begins with the threat that these crimes will pale before those they're about to commit. They'll stop at nothing to secure Persian Gulf oil. If Bush fails to fall in line, he can be replaced, one way or another. Either way, the result will be death and mayhem for our class.

Building a mass, international PLP will eventually smash imperialist war and police state terror. Great danger also brings opportunity. Our Party can grow, today, tomorrow and well into the future. The 21st Century will be an epoch of war and fascism. It can also usher in a new, communist dawn for humanity.

On this May Day, we recommit ourselves to a lifetime of revolutionary struggle. Every participant in PLP's international May Day activities is a ray of light, pointing the way out of the New Dark Ages capitalism has brought to the world. Let's make every marcher a member, and every member a leader in the Party and the mass movement. Fight for Communism! Power to the Workers! Workers of the World, Unite!✪

Oil, Bases, Euro Drove U.S. War in Iraq

continued from front page

East. Therefore, Saddam Hussein's government had to be replaced with a friendly one.

"Second, the U.S. needed bases in the Middle East, but those…in Saudi Arabia were likely…to be…shut down because of popular hostility…. They needed to be replaced with bases in Iraq.

"Finally, under the U.N. Food for Oil Program, Iraq's government had changed the pricing and sale of its oil to euros, the European common currency, in place of dollars, as oil had always previously been sold.

"…When U.N. sanctions were lifted, and Iraq could resume producing and selling as much oil as it wanted, it would undoubtedly continue to sell it for euros.

"Since Iraq could soon become the second most important oil producer in the world, this would be a serious blow to the dollar's role as the prime international trading currency…. One of…Bush's first post-invasion acts was an executive order re-pricing Iraq oil in dollars….

"It…apparently didn't really make any difference…whether Iraq did or did not have weapons of mass destruction."

The oil factor has been central to every Democratic (and Republican) administration since Democrat Jimmy Carter. The Clinton administration established "regime change" in Iraq as a policy aim and Gore had made this a presidential campaign pledge. Their tactics might have differed — granting concessions to obtain more international capitalist support — but the strategic needs of U.S. imperialism still rule. Now Democratic Party nominee Kerry and Hillary Clinton are calling for still more troops in Iraq.

U.S. imperialism cannot change its spots. It is driven to endless wars to maintain world domination for maximum profits.✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

✪PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of the profit system, like wages and divisions of labor.

✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✪Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✪Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM • LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO • PLP

CHALLENGE PERIODICALS
PO Box 808
BROOKLYN, NY 11202
www.plp.org
email:
cd188@juno.com
718 630 9440

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue $.50. Subscription: $15. Six months: $10. Send address changes to *CHALLENGE* Periodicals, GPO 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202. May 12, 2004 Volume 38, No.34

DRIVER-RIDER UNITY ATTACKS MUNI WAR CUTS

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, April 23 — The imperialist oil war in Iraq is an inevitable outgrowth of the "rules of engagement" of capitalist economics. Transit workers and riders face attacks on our wages, working conditions and transit service from these same "rules" in the current MUNI (mass transit) budget battles.

When our poster and various leaflets exposing MUNI's planned service cuts began appearing on buses, at bus stops and subway stations, MUNI brass panicked. Director Burns demanded that supervisors do a "search and destroy" operation on these "unauthorized posters," showing their fear of driver-rider unity.

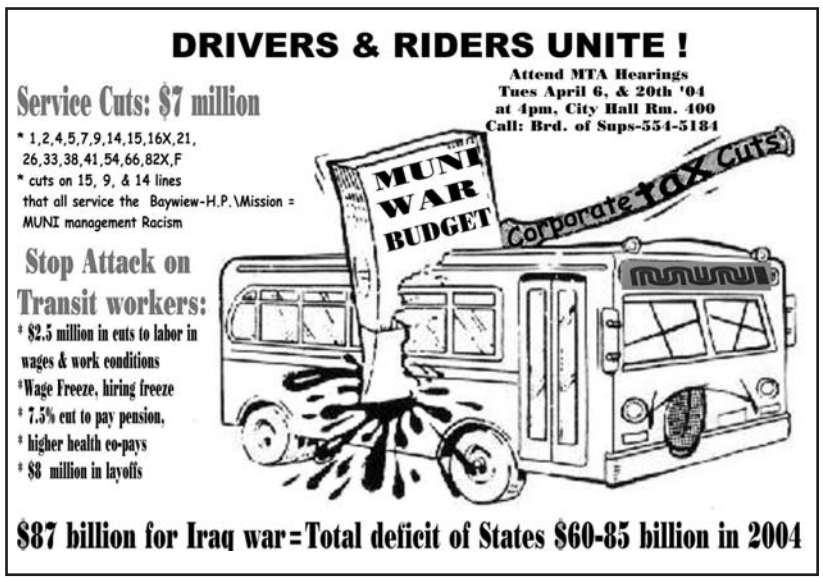
MUNI has been pushing the lie that they were only planning "service adjustments." Riders and drivers showed up united at public hearings to fight the cuts. A PL member attacked MUNI and the MTA board for trying to solve their deficit with service, wage and benefit cuts and layoffs, while the Downtown Capitalists are left out of the picture altogether. Burns backed down on some service cuts this week.

Peter Straus, MUNI's manager of service planning, said the cuts are being "made to match current ridership levels." (SF Chronicle, 2/18) Riders and drivers trashed this argument. All-night "Owl Service" is a lifeline for many low-paid, non-white and immigrant service workers with irregular hours. Their needs must be met. We demand mass transit for the needs of the working class, not just rush-hour service for the downtown business corridor. Every battle presents dangers and opportunities. By mainly pointing out holes in MUNI funding, workers can be seduced into supporting politicians who want Big Business to pay its "fare share." We can show that the government enforces a class dictatorship of big capital that won't end with a new mayor or president.

It is even more seductive to concentrate on Burns, who got a 26% raise to $280,000 a year while asking everyone else for concessions. Many drivers focus on Burns' personal racism (he once asked a driver why MUNI has so many blacks), but not on capitalism's racist institutions he administers.

We're in this fight for the long term. As our co-workers become more fed up and angry, we can explain how the inter-imperialist rivalry between the U.S., Europe and Asia causes both the war in Iraq and the attacks on services at home. We have been discussing the draft of a new PLP article, "Who Rules the U.S." which has been especially helpful in revealing the unseen forces driving capitalism in this period.

Sometimes we meet in groups and often have many individual conversations. Deep personal relationships allow one to dig down and find out what workers really think about communism and the world, their questions and disagreements. CHALLENGE articles and leaflets can underline or crystallize ideas that our co-workers already have. A political economy group meets regularly, and we're active in the union and immediate battles on many levels.


DRIVERS & RIDERS UNITE !
Attend MTA Hearings
Tues April 6, & 20th '04
at 4pm, City Hall Rm. 400
Call: Brd. of Sups-554-5184
Service Cuts: $7 million
* 1,2,4,5,7,9,14,15,16X,21, 26,33,38,41,54,66,82X,F
* cuts on 15, 9, & 14 lines that all service the Baywiew-H.P.\Mission = MUNI management Racism
Stop Attack on Transit workers:
* $2.5 million in cuts to labor in wages & work conditions
*Wage Freeze, hiring freeze
* 7.5% cut to pay pension,
* higher health co-pays
* $8 million in layoffs
MUNI WAR BUDGET
Corporate tax Cuts
$87 billion for Iraq war=Total deficit of States $60-85 billion in 2004

There is a growing circle of people who see beyond Burns to the capitalist class he represents. They are critical thinkers and dangerous to the system. They have the potential to join PLP and lead a revolutionary movement that won't be limited by "the rules of engagement" set out by the politicians, MTA, Burns or the union leadership. Our June 30 contract deadline could provide more opportunities.✪

Mexico: Capitalist 'Reform' Robs Retirees' Pensions

MEXICO CITY, April 20 — Over 120,000 social security (IMSS), telephone, electrical, university and other workers marched through the historic center of this city rejecting the rulers' "reform" of the pension and retirement systems. They're offering a miserable pension of $5 a day to 40 million workers, ending the plan which provides full wages to retirees.

Angry workers called for a nation-wide general strike if this "reform" is imposed, but union "leaders" are already making deals with the government. Workers cannot defeat the bosses' attacks following these pro-boss sellouts. We need to develop a red leadership and turn these struggles into schools for communism. Then we can build a mass communist Party and fight for a society where our golden years won't be reduced to fighting for crumbs. Workers will run society and provide for all of us according to our needs. Under communism, older workers will be able to enjoy a full life teaching and serving as examples to the younger generation, without worrying where their next meal will come from.

Workers blame the corruption of the IMSS administrators for having brought its finances to the brink, risking the pensions of 120,000 IMSS retirees and 360,000 current IMSS workers. It's true that these bosses are crooks, but the "reform's" main purpose is to save bosses a bundle by eliminating future pension plan payments. This will help all bosses be more competitive in this capitalist world of endless wars for markets and "jobless recoveries." This system can never give workers a decent life. It must be swept away.

The demonstrators also denounced the enormous wage disparity in the IMSS. Director Levy gets 220,000 pesos ($20,000 dollars) a month, while a doctor gets only 19,000 ($1727). A specialized nurse receives 10,000 ($909) a month and a clerk only 2,200 ($200). To end this inequality we must abolish the capitalist wage-slavery system.

Demonstrators also warned that once the pension "reform" succeeds at the IMSS, it will hit other public and private sectors workers. Workers always on the defensive against the bosses' endless attacks risk dying a slow death while the bosses' drive for maximum profits sees no end. We in PLP must increase our efforts to bring our communist politics to all workers, and speed the process that will eliminate this capitalist hell.✪

Red Leadership Growing in D.C. Metro, Isolating Pro-boss Prez

WASHINGTON, D.C. April 15 — About six months ago, over 1,200 transit workers voted for PLP member Mike Golash for President of the 6,000-member Local 689, Amalgamated Transportation Workers Union (ATU). While Mike didn't win the election, we applauded this as a significant political development. A largely black workforce showed a lot of support to an open communist, in the shadow of the White House, in the midst of an imperialist invasion and developing Homeland Security police state.

Many workers who supported and campaigned for Mike, including regular readers and distributors of CHALLENGE, didn't fully appreciate the results of their efforts at the time. Many were disappointed that we didn't win the election. Even some Party members thought it was a failed effort. But dozens of transit workers took part in the campaign and a core group became more committed to PLP's revolutionary politics.

Meanwhile, at the April union meeting, the winner of the election attacked everyone in attendance for being "out to get him."

A PLP collective is studying communist ideas and trying to breathe some militant life into their union, while the re-elected president is feeling isolated.

In an early sign of progress, they defeated the President's efforts to re-run elections for those union offices in which his cronies were defeated. They're starting a newsletter to give mass political leadership to the workers. This is winning. It is also the result of 25 years of patient and consistent base building for the PLP and winning the respect of the workers. Stay tuned as the struggle around the new contract intensifies.✪

Kerry, Clinton No Friends of Women Workers

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 25 — The night before today's huge "March for Women's Lives" here, PLP held a forum on a communist view of the fight against sexism. PLP's politics represented a 180° turn from that put forward by the leadership of the Women's March. Our forum discussed — and condemned — the broad range of women's oppression worldwide, from the slave-like conditions in Indonesian sweatshops to forced prostitution of 12-year-olds — all caused by profit-hungry capitalism. Meanwhile, yesterday's demonstration became a big rally for Kerry, who wants to send still more troops to Iraq, another 40,000 women and men to kill Iraqi women and men.

This contrasted sharply with the history of the communist-led fight against sexism, including the mass burning by liberated and liberating women of the oppressive burkha and chador (full-length veils) in the Soviet Asian republics in the 1920s, to the battle against binding women's feet in China (and for their leadership in the struggle) under the slogan, "Women hold up half the sky."

Many at the forum took bunches of CHALLENGES and May Day leaflets to distribute the next day. We provided a revolutionary alternative in the fight against sexism to the boss-led march (featuring pro-war Hillary Clinton), which focused on voting for Kerry to get rid of Bush.

A woman who had attended the PLP forum and worked for Planned Parenthood, one of the march's main sponsors, called a PL'er the next morning to declare her disgust at the March's structure. She felt it was a publicity battle between Planned Parenthood and the National Abortion Rights Action League. The politics and consciousness never went beyond abortion rights and voting for Democrats.

She thought this was horrible at a time when U.S. imperialism was murdering thousands in Iraq, while fascism and economic crises grow in the U.S. and worldwide. She said the march represented a predominantly middle class view, not the class interests of workers, especially black workers who are being hit the hardest economically, and whose reproductive health needs were quite different from the affluent leaders of this rally.✪

Boeing Union Misleaders Use Human Rights, Women's Conference to Promote War Strategy

Seattle, WA, March 27—The Human Rights, Labor History and Women's Committees of IAM District Lodge 751 sponsored a day-long conference entitled, "Rosie's War; The Fight for Worker's Rights." About two hundred participants from various unions and retiree organizations heard our union misleaders brag that this first such gathering in IAM history demonstrated their commitment to diversity and women's rights. As the day wore on, it became clear that their only commitment was to aiding the bosses' war plans.

The highlight of the conference was awarding "plaques of appreciation" to two black women who worked at the Boeing plants during WWII, but were denied union membership because of racist exclusion clauses at that time. The awards ceremony praised their devotion to the "security of our nation and the rights of workers," and fit in with the patriotic posters hung around the Boeing workers' hall. A documentary was shown during lunch, featuring women and minorities who got jobs in basic industry during the war, at wages higher than they were used to.

Labor Strategy for Constant War

Everyone received the white paper, "Revitalizing American Manufacturing," publishing by the Industrial Union Council of the AFL-CIO. It calls for "strengthening the manufacturing base for national defense and homeland security...." The "Root of the Crisis," they assert, is an industrial policy that "encourage[s] American firms to move factories and jobs offshore." They call for an "industrial development policy" to help "the nations' manufacturing industries...become more globally competitive." (Democratic presidential candidate Kerry lifted his industrial policy directly from this white paper.)

The misleaders attempt to turn this conference into a forum to promote an industrial policy for constant war did not go unchallenged. "WWII is the theme of this conference, but there are big differences between that war and the present war in Iraq," warned one worker.

"Workers were won to fighting in WWII because that was a fight against fascism," she continued, "but the war in Iraq is about oil and capitalist domination." The union leaders did not dare contradict her, in contrast to last year, when they put up a big fight against any anti-war resolutions during the run up to the war.

"Besides, this time, as the wars spread, the bosses plan to create industrial jobs with low-wage, minimum-wage subcontractors here in the U.S. Any real fight against racism and sexism will have to focus on these jobs, where larger proportions of minorities and women work."

Apparently, this was too much! The misleaders didn't want anything like fighting racist, sexist exploitation, to get in the way of electoral politics.

The New Economy and War

The Internet and computers allow aerospace and other basic industries to switch large chucks of manufacturing to domestic and "offshore" subcontractors. In Boeing's case, the same bosses that run Boeing often control these subcontractors. By focusing solely on offshore manufacturing, the union builds nationalism and covers its own failure to fight racist, sexist exploitation in these domestic subcontracting plants.

Industrial workers are still key. Despite various recessions, the absolute numbers of manufacturing workers in the U.S. have remained fairly stable since 1965, between 15 and 20 million according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Millions of black, Latin and women workers are forced to work for low-wage subcontractors. Their ranks will swell as the bosses tool for more extensive wars. These super-exploited industrial workers can lead the march to revolution if we fight to build the Party and CHALLENGE.

The unions are using every trick in the book to win us to support the bosses' increasingly expensive war plans. But if the reaction of many disgruntled Boeing workers to this conference is any indication, they have a long way to go. If we initiate and intensify anti-racist, anti-sexist class struggle, we can make their job even harder. ✪

D.C. PEPCO WORKERS WON'T BE FOOLED

WASHINGTON D.C., April 23—The contract between the electrical workers and PEPCO expires May 31. The union hacks finished "negotiations" in less than a week, and after two angry meetings, the sellout contract was voted down. It's good to reject such a stinking contract, but it's better to reject the capitalist system and fight for communism!

The proposed contract included a two-tier benefits package. It eliminated a job security clause for new hires that said PEPCO workers with 12½ years or more could not be laid off until PEPCO dropped all contractors. The contract would have pushed retirement beyond 30 years service and 55 years of age and eliminated health insurance for retirees. Vacations for new hires would have been scaled back. Health insurance premiums would have risen every year of the three-year contract. A family plan would go up from $90 to $150 and more after that. PEPCO also wanted to change the contract expiration date from May 31 to March 31, removing the workers' "summer season" leverage. The dilapidated D.C. infrastructure is very old. In the summer more manhole covers explode and brownouts occur, along with other weather-related mishaps.

Now Maryland is granting PEPCO a 16% rate increase, something the union mis-leaders wanted to cover up so they could ram through the bosses' plan. PEPCO tried to terrorize workers because it is facing a lawsuit from Morant, which bought PEPCO's generators during deregulation, and PEPCO claims it could lose $600-700 million. But PEPCO and their pets in the union leadership failed to intimidate the workers, for now.

A few workers have been relating this contract battle to a larger worldview. Would Homeland Security ban a strike because PEPCO is a utility based in the nation's capital? As terrorist threats mount, civil liberties will go by the wayside. Explaining the necessity to fight fascism is essential for the survival of our Party, family, friends and co-workers. Workers dislike the bosses' government dictating to them what to do. More workers must join with the PLP and expand these discussions through reading CHALLENGE, and build a militant group, especially younger workers active in the union around revolutionary ideas. ✪

Liberal Washington Post Helps Union Sell Out D.C. Workers

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 20. The U.S. capitalist system is driving down workers everywhere, breaking unions, establishing multi-tier wage systems, and contracting out like mad — all to expand its profits and lock down the working class as the rulers move onto a permanent war footing. Most union leaders help this along because they believe in capitalism, which drives to extract maximum profits from workers' labor. Better to cut a lousy deal and keep the dues flowing.

The United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) leaders in this area are part of this pitiful, let-the-bosses-screw-us operation. They called the recent grocery workers' contract a "victory," but new workers get shafted on health care costs and overtime pay — with greater out-of-pocket costs and two- to six-year waiting periods for standard full-coverage — while established workers barely break even.

The D.C. area contracts expired barely a month after the sellout of the Southern California grocery strikers. The latter had targeted Safeway for a boycott here. They came east to lead informational picket lines, a weak tactic in itself, but UFCW Local 400 didn't even inform its Safeway members about that, sabotaging even minimal worker solidarity.

The media conspired with management and sellout union officials to demoralize the workers. Giant and Safeway stores promoted fear and intimidation, advertising for and hiring scabs a full week before the contract expired. On March 30, a Washington Post lead story reported a contract agreement between the companies and the union — before mass meetings of Safeway and Giant workers held that day and then expected an immediate workers vote, allotting no time for reading, digesting and discussing the proposals.

Then Safeway workers met at 8 a.m. By 10:30 news "leaked out" that they'd ratified the contract, while Giant workers didn't meet until 12 Noon, when it was already a done deal. Giant workers wouldn't strike without Safeway workers.

The only media the working class can rely on is the communist press you are holding in your hand. The only answer to these boss-union schemes is for workers to move past their pro-capitalist union mis-leaders and fight for workers' power, where the working class runs society to serve its needs. ✪

JUSTICE FOR APARTHEID ASSASSIN IN IRAQ

(From The Australian, 4/27)

Some of the worst human rights violators of the apartheid era, including a man who helped kill 14 civilians while they slept, have been employed as security contractors in Iraq.

A South African killed in Iraq...once worked for a secret apartheid death squad....assassinating civilians who sympathized with black liberation movements. Gray Branfield, 55, was the latest South African casualty...to have obtained lucrative employment...in Iraq. His decapitated and mutilated body was found after a gunfight between Shi'ite radicals and Ukrainian forces in Kut....

In 1981....Branfield helped plan a raid into...Botswana in which 14 people, including a child, were killed....Most of the dead were shot in their beds as they slept....

South Africa is a favoured recruiting ground, after the U.S. and Britain, for the private security firms. At least 1,500 of the estimated 10,000 private contractors operating in Iraq are South African....

After apartheid ended, the former soldiers found themselves unemployed....Many became mercenaries

When the war in Iraq broke out...they rushed to join what seemed to be a safe, well-paid venture. Instead, they found civilians who shot back. ✪

'Circular Logic' Dooms Working-Class Anti-Racist Struggle

Recently, as an extension of Black History Month, students at the University of Washington held a three-day "White Skin Privilege Week," culminating in a forum to discuss these ideas. After a panel of three people from the People's Institute Northwest made a presentation, we asked to talk about solutions to racism. One woman said we couldn't because solutions "were too complex to discuss here." Another panelist said talking "linearly about solutions, about getting from here to there" was a "white way of thinking" and we needed to think "circularly." Instead of this dead-end logic, we need to intensify the anti-racist struggle here to serve the interests of all workers and students.

THINKING IN CIRCLES

The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond is one of the foremost advocates of white skin privilege (WSP) theory. A discussion among comrades revealed that the premises behind this approach to racism are completely wrong. WSP completely contradicts a class analysis, which says racism, has an economic as well as a political basis. All workers are exploited by capitalism, but racism enables the bosses to super-exploit black and Latino workers to extract super-profits — paying some workers less for the same work. These racist attacks drag down wages and benefits for all workers, and divides them as well. As Marx said, "Labor in white skin shall not be free while labor in black skin is branded."

WSP theory says white workers can never really understand the oppression faced by blacks and Latinos and it is offensive for them to think they can, that white workers can only understand "their own privilege" and use this position to stop the oppression of non-white workers. WSP denies the need for class struggle to deal with racism, instead appealing to white people's morality. It blames racism on white workers rather than on capitalists who use and perpetuate racism in their class interest. WSP ignores the class nature of capitalism and promotes its reform rather than a real fight-back against racism and its cause, the profit system. Only a class analysis of racism, emphasizing that all exploited workers need to smash racism in order to build a powerful, united working-class force is capable of destroying the bosses' dictatorship.

THINKING DIALECTICALLY

The struggle at the panel discussion intensified after a comrade challenged the effectiveness of "educating" about racism without a plan to abolish it. A young man said we couldn't begin to deal with class issues without first dealing with racism. But when will we have "dealt" with racism? We can't separate racism from capitalism, from a class analysis. While we all struggle in a racist society with our own racist ideas, capitalism is the problem, not workers. We can only fight racist institutions by uniting multi-racially in our class interest to destroy capitalism and establish a communist society without exploitation of any workers.

WSP theory is the latest in a long line of ideologies designed to distract workers from a class analysis of capitalism. Various ruling-class foundations support this approach to racism because it works in their class interest (see article next issue). It appeals to young workers and students as a "new" approach to the nagging problem of racism. This ideology will further divide the working class. We must debunk WSP's "circular" logic with a dialectical analysis and expose its dangers to effective class struggle against racism.

Our best plan is to build class-conscious, anti-racist struggles at the universities, exposing the racist nature of the university system, the racist cutbacks in financial aid, the racist ideologies of "evolutionary biology" pushed by the ruling class, and the connections between racism in the U.S. — the attacks on immigrants — and endless wars for profit. Then we can show how ruling-class ideologies such as WSP will not end racism, that the only solution is communist revolution.✪

War Contract Creates 2 Tier System for NYC Workers

NEW YORK CITY, April, 21 — At a shop stewards' meeting of Local 371, District Council 37, AFSCME, significant applause greeted a retiree's pro-war characterization of a proposed contract covering 125,000 city workers. The leader of this 15,000-member local summarized the proposals but chose not to endorse or oppose them. One long-time union activist called for an emergency membership meeting to discuss the proposals, saying union members struck in 1965 and 1967 not only for their own needs but for the workers coming after them. She labeled this settlement selfish because current workers would get a small raise in part funded by give-backs for newly-hired workers. (In fact, the '65 contract included benefits for welfare clients as well as members.)

The retiree explained that, (1) the assembled stewards needed to assert their leadership by voting to reject this proposal; and (2) this contract reflected the political/financial needs of the ruling class to fund their imperialist war aims and fight off their rivals by reducing labor costs and U.S. workers' standard of living. The leadership refused to call for a special membership meeting and declared that tonight's meeting no longer had enough members to vote on the contract.

An April 13 meeting of the retirees association discussed the direction of the contract talks, citing the lack of vision on the part of Lillian Roberts, recently narrowly re-elected head of DC 37. One retiree recalled the 1975 fiscal crisis when the NY Daily News ran a headline, "Ford to NY — Drop Dead!" meaning zero money to solve the city's fiscal crisis. Now Mayor Bloomberg makes no pretense of asking for additional federal aid. This fits right into the nation-wide attack on the working class to fund the bosses' imperialist war. This was the reason, the retiree argued, that we should "oppose this war contract."

For all workers hired after July 1, the proposed settlement will reduce starting pay 15% for the first two years; cut 24 vacation days over 10 years; chop 10 sick leave days over five years; eliminate one holiday per year; cut 50% of the value of unused sick days when these workers retire; and reduce night differentials. This will create a downward pull on the pay and benefits for those currently employed who are not yet affected by these cuts.

PLP members and friends should fight to increase class struggle against the class collaboration reflected in this contract. We should call for local shop meetings to discuss it and for local demonstrations where possible, join with others opposing the settlement and demand a strike, uniting with other city workers like teachers who are still working without a contract. The reactions of these two large DC 37 groups, active shop stewards and retired members, indicate anger at the settlement and openness to PLP's class analysis of capitalism and imperialism.✪

California Cuts Screw Students, Help Fund U.S. Attack on Iraq

LOS ANGELES, April 26 — Last January, Gov. Schwarzenegger proposed to slash the budget for the University of California, the California State University and the Community College System. The cuts included a combination of enrollment caps, fee increases, closed classes, layoffs and the elimination of outreach and retention programs that recruit nearly 50% of black, Latin and Asian students to higher education. The racist attack on EOP (Equal Opportunity Program) hits all students. The California Legislature will vote on Schwarzenegger's proposals in June.

A large coalition of organizations has formed to oppose these devastating racist cuts. Today, shouting "No more cuts," and "No cuts! No war! The cuts are for the war!" over 1,500 students rallied downtown, displaying students' and professors' anger. However, there is a difference between the masses and the leadership. The planning and the rally itself revealed strong ideological conflict about how to organize this movement.

At the rally, PLP condemned the budget cuts, the war and the capitalist system. We distributed a communist May Day leaflet on the buses traveling to the march. Once there our chants linking the war to the cuts were shouted by hundreds, in opposition to the leadership's chants.

One student speaker explained how the budget cuts were funding imperialist war, saying that every bomb falling in Iraq is an attack on us as well — "Iraqi workers are our brothers and sisters." He condemned the system, calling for a revolutionary movement to destroy it, urging students to come to the May Day March. Almost all the protesters got our leaflet, some signing up to march.

Reformist notions of social change consume much of the coalition's leadership. Tremendous effort is directed at lobbying local politicians and letter-writing campaigns. This implies that social change happens by voting for better politicians and begging them to save education, healthcare and other social programs. But by passing the budget cuts, these politicians are merely serving their masters: the bosses.

The cuts are not just the "insane" plan of "evil politicians" like Bush or the Terminator, but systematic products of class oppression and a war budget. Under capitalism, bosses must always maximize profit; they will cut budgets and wages, lay off workers, and go to war — and much more. The situation will change by organizing workers, students and soldiers not only for some social changes, but to build a revolution that will overthrow the profit system which lives by our misery.

We must appeal not to politicians, but to those who have no interest in supporting a racist system that massacres our social services, enabling the very few rich to get richer while masses suffer. We need to appeal to those who have no interest in supporting a war that defends the bosses' imperialist profits. We must rely on the working class, and build a movement to fight for communism, workers' power. The best place to start is to join PLP.✪

LETTERS

Driving the Nazis From Marquette Park

On the weekend of April 3, I attended the 25th anniversary celebration of throwing the Nazis out of Marquette Park in Chicago. PLP led 700 anti-racists to integrate the neighborhood in our 1979 Communist May Day March. It drove the Nazis from public organizing. I revisited the historic sites of Marquette Park and Haymarket Square, and saw old and young comrades.

The ruling class created a safe haven for racist-fascists in Marquette Park, including Nazi sympathizers from Eastern Europe. Our determination stopped this scheme. Before that, black and Latin workers couldn't drive or even take a bus through the area without being literally attacked.

At that time I lived in another Midwest city. Our PLP group had organized significant, militant opposition to the Nazis and KKK, pouncing on them at several radio stations where they were scheduled to speak and wherever they would try to hold street-corner rallies. In these efforts, we drilled in teams of three, our collective for the battle — important for protection, as a buddy system and to organize the objective. We wore caps to shield our heads, steel-toed shoes and two jackets for protection. Women didn't wear earrings or jewelry. Everyone tied up their long hair. Comrade-soldiers in the National Guard helped us practice. While political will is essential, tactical preparation is very important.

The integration of Marquette Park was widely broadcast internationally. Huge headlines announced it in England, but it drew barely any mention in U.S. papers. This mirrored the continuing blackout of the 1886 Chicago general strike and the Haymarket Square battle that gave birth to the international workers' holiday, May Day. A little-known statue stands in the city's Waldheim Cemetery, recognizing the four framed labor heroes who the rulers hung after they had led this historic struggle for the 8-hour day.

A Marquette May Day marcher

Racism Exposed By Class Analysis

When I started attending my church, I heard some people in the congregation wanted to do something about racism. I liked this idea but had serious criticisms of their analysis of racism. They seemed to be saying the main cause of racism was that white folks liked the privileges they received from holding black people down. This does not address the real economic benefits this racist system gives to those in power, at the expense of all workers.

I was asked to join a church committee that would further identify and begin to change racism within the church itself. Though I disagreed with much of what had been presented, I joined the committee to struggle for a more realistic understanding within the group, rather than outside it.

I considered myself to be an anti-racist for many years but I still learned much from the training sessions and discussions which deal with racism on an institutional level. We also discuss how we internalize attitudes that contradict our best interests.

In the past few years the denomination's analysis of the racist nature of the system has developed and grown much deeper. This occurred because many church members refused to limit themselves to blaming individual whites for an entire racist system. Besides learning from the newer and better analysis, I've also contributed much to the discussions about the class nature and economic basis of racism. It's more than just a thug for capitalism; it's also the major cash cow and a divisive tool of a vicious economic and social system. In joining the committee I'm also getting to know some people on a deeper level. You have to be in it to have a serious effect on the process.

An anti-racist learner

Challenging Rockefeller's Church

In this era of growing imperialist rivalry, war and fascism, it's important to see more than just the open right-wing role of religious forces like Mel Gibson and his Passion. I belong to a large liberal church whose benefactors are the Rockefellers. Both Lawrence and David Rockefeller paid an Easter visit to the church and received praises from the senior minister. He, his think-tank consultants and certain members of the Church Council have mapped out an 8-month-and-beyond project called "Restoring America's Moral, Spiritual and Democratic Values."

These ruling-class "leaders" have set themselves up as the "progressive liberal Christian response" to Bush and the Christian Right, and are attempting to mobilize the peace and justice seekers. Having been "called by God" and the Rockefeller family, they are projecting "a church-wide effort to inspire, inform and rally the voting public." Those who have raised concerns have been told to "lead, follow, move over or leave."

Many in the congregation are enthusiastic, but others are doubtful. A couple of friends are moving closer to joining the Party, having been propelled to the left during this recent period. I have prepared the following statement to share with some friends. Depending on the response, we may do more with it or the essence of its ideas.

THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

All that glitters is not gold.

Beware of wolves in sheep's clothing.

It's like the fox guarding the chicken coop.

Look before you leap.

Remember the story of the tortoise and the rabbit.

The Prophetic Principles of Mobilization 2004 are based on a couple of assumptions with which I disagree. "Restoring values," at least some, assumes that they were noble and true in U.S. history. It's also assumed that U.S. imperialism can be benevolent and righteous. I think the history of the U.S., as a capitalist system, has to be examined, as it really was in the practice. What is the nature of modern imperialism? Has it somehow changed? What is the objective situation in the world and what are the geopolitical imperatives of U.S. imperialism? What is the role of class struggle and revolution now and in history?

I see the church at this point as an instrument of the liberal ruling class in the U.S. At its service. What are the church's connections to liberal ruling-class think-tanks, including religious ones? I think these groups have chosen/drafted the senior minister as one of their servants, tools, agents. The words may rankle. Is this position one which will save the masses of suffering working-class people or one that will serve us up to the forces building fascism and waging war? We have to learn from history and look at the world as it really is now.

'A little-known statue (right) stands in the city's Waldheim Cemetery, recognizing the four framed labor heroes who the rulers hung after they had led this historic struggle for the 8-hour day.'

A Marquette May Day marcher

The process of launching Mobilization 2004 leaves little room for questioning at this point. You're in or out, with or against. "We're all together. Don't be Jonah."

Are we now policing ourselves to control dissent? A church council letter refers to "good behavior and responsibility." Are we being trained or molded to be good *foot soldiers marching in step* (words taken from a church service) for the "oneness" of country, God and church (in the words of the president of the Church Council)? That would conform to Kerry's platform called *A New Army of Patriots.* Are we becoming idol worshippers, not rational thinkers? In dismantling parts of active Social Justice groups and folding them into Mobilization 2004 we are cutting a structural way that we can use to challenge the system ideologically and analytically, while acting from below. This so-called "community policing" internally may prove to be more insidious than the openly repressive measures of the Patriot Act.

Regarding the Patriot Act and Homeland Security: Can we accept that a little fascism is O.K.? We need to consider how fascism was defeated historically and how it can be defeated now.

I/we have to choose our battles. We cannot allow our spirits to be broken. Taking on the whole of Mobilization 2004 may be too much for now. What can we expect to do or not to do at this juncture? Let's talk.

Another red churchmouse

Don't Mourn — Organize

In Iraq, more U.S. soldiers have been killed and wounded in a year of war than in Vietnam during the first three years of that war. Iraq is a dangerous place but in the U.S. an average of 16 workers are killed and nearly 15,000 hurt or made ill on the job EVERY DAY. Each year 6,000 workers are killed at the workplace, 50,000 die from occupational diseases and millions are injured (5.2 million in 2001).

Like Veterans' Day, the AFL-CIO-sponsored Workers' Memorial Day (April 28) will be characterized by mourning and patriotic flag-waving staged by the bosses and the unions to promote the idea that workers are united with the bloodthirsty system the rulers represent. They want to misdirect our anger at the wholesale murder and atrocities they are inflicting on the working class in the U.S. and worldwide.

On May Day we can show that another world is possible, where communism serves workers' needs. We can march under the red flag of international working-class unity and join the struggles against murderous jobs, speed-up, layoffs, no health care and the profit system that forces unemployed labor into wars for oil and "free trade zones" as in Iraq and around the globe.

Joe Hill was a union organizer who was framed and executed by the capitalist bosses. At the very end, he told his brother and sister workers, "Don't mourn for me — organize."

Survivor of corporate wars on workers

Workers Can Run Society

Recently in San Francisco I met an ex-coworker from SBC (Southwestern Bell Communications), the phone company. "Long time no see," I said. "How are you? Will SBC strike?" I asked.

We don't have much to say, one way or the other,' he replied. "If we strike, we strike."

"SBC is talking $60 monthly co-payments on medical," I went on. "Didn't we have three strikes to stop them? And this from a corporation that netted over $8 billion in profits."

"Yes," my friend answered, "Some of the bosses received 20% increases, and the CEO gets $20 million. But," he said, "we have to have bosses!"

"Not if workers have a revolution that smashes capitalism and creates communism," I shot back."

"You're still talking that stuff," my friend replied.

"Yes, more so than ever," I said.

"Well," he went on, "we'll still have to have someone tell us what to do."

"Does someone tell you what to do after 35 years at the phone company?" I asked.

"No," he replied, "I pretty much know what to do, and I show others, too."

"That's the kind of working together — collectively — and helping each other that we're talking about under communism," I said.

My friend then told me, "I've got to go to work."

"Take it easy," I concluded.

Keep up the good work in CHALLENGE.

West Coast phone worker

Cross Country Solidarity

Our public sector union voted to donate $250 to help the California grocery strikers. Unfortunately the workers settled for an awful contract (see CHALLENGE, 3/17). The same meeting decided Community Action Teams (CATS), composed of union members and community activists, would visit Safeway stores urging shoppers to boycott Safeway in solidarity with the California strikers. After that strike was settled, CATS would go to both Giant and Safeway stores pledging to honor their picket lines.

continued on next page

LETTERS
CONTINUED

Our CAT group went to our neighborhood Safeway and talked to workers about a strike and pledged our support. We were warmly received.

At our March 25 membership meeting, our union voted unanimously not only to honor the picket lines, but to actively join the lines if the workers struck here.

Before the contract vote, my team went to our neighborhood Giant and Safeway stores. We told the workers we lived in the area and would support them if they struck. We mentioned our Local's support vote. Things were heating up. Safeway and Giant had already advertised and hired scabs. (See page 4) The workers were very grateful and pleasantly surprised to find the community and other workers would support them. One worker was confident people would honor the picket lines in this union town. Younger workers were unaware of the strike issues and of the union's response. The older workers were more informed and talkative. But few thought the union would call a strike.

The union shoved a two tier system of pension and health insurance and a three tier wage system onto the workers. I aim to keep up with some of the CAT members and invite them to social and political events this Spring and Summer. They already realize I'm an active anti-racist. At our first meeting, I mentioned my participation in a demonstration against the neo-Nazi National Alliance when they came to Washington in August 2002

D.C. Unionist

Community Policing Blames Victims

The "Community Policing" article in the April 28 issue was right on target. I live in a small New England city, and the politicians — liberal and conservative — are pushing for community policing. I got a notice on my door a while back and went to see what they were up to.

It was all about blame. It was stated over and over that "anti-social" young people first had to apologize for their bad ways and then make some kind of deal to work off, or whatever, the results of their actions. (The fact that young people acting "anti-social" might have real reasons for their aggression of course was never considered. Writing graffiti on a fence may not be the ideal social activity, but it might very well be a small indication of the hopelessness young people feel in this vicious capitalist society. Sure, they should find more constructive ways to show their displeasure — most preferably in the fight for a fair communist society!)

A neighbor of mine, a very committed and active person, was singled out by the mayor as being an important element of the community policing movement.

He really tried to puff her up, but I went over to her — and to other people in the room who indicated they weren't falling for the crap — and told her she was being used to con other people into buying the mayor's line.

I asked her, "How come not one word was said about poverty or joblessness? It's always the fault of the poor, according to these creeps, never about the society and big business." She saw this was true, and I believe she got out of the clutches of these right-wing "reformers."

It would have been better if I had stood up and said my piece, but I felt I couldn't for personal reasons. Still, I got at least a couple of people away from a fascist line in liberal clothing.

One other thing: The *first sentence* of another article in that issue of CHALLENGE contained the following words: " indigenous," "chauvinist," and "permeating." What's wrong with "local," "male supremecist," and "filling"?

The simpler the word, the more people will understand our line.

New England Red

White Skin Theory: A Bosses' Idea

A new form of nationalism is rising in academic circles called White Privilege. It's an offshoot of multi-cultural studies at the school where I work, and is taught in college departments of multicultural and ethnic studies. White skin privilege says the primary difference between people is "race" and that, in the U.S. and other societies with white rulers, if you're white, you have immediate advantages and are automatically racist. It says white people must first acknowledge this advantage and then teach others that whiteness is inherently bad. Many advocates of this theory are white themselves.

While it's true that the primary form of U.S. racism is the attack on black and Latino workers and youth, as well as all immigrants, the White Skin Privilege advocates mistakenly claim the main division between people is "race," not class. They don't see racism as the cutting edge of the attack on all workers and youth, including white workers.

They avoid political analysis of racial and economic differences in society. Many are hostile to communist ideas. They don't tie racism to economic exploitation and also ignore the advantages to the ruling class of dividing the working class by "race" and racism. In fact, the wages and conditions of white workers have declined even as those of black and Latino workers have been attacked even more. These failures result from their rejecting a class-based solution.

These theorists also don't see that electing black and Latino politicians do not improve conditions for most workers, black, Latinos or white. A glaring example of this is the end of legal apartheid in South Africa. Despite the illusion of "more democracy," despite a government overwhelmingly dominated by black politicians, poverty there remains staggering, especially for the masses of black workers. Terrible exploitation exists whether the rulers are white or non-white because these are capitalist countries.

The universities encourage theories of White Skin Privilege. However, some people who subscribe to, and even teach, this theory are open to understanding that capitalism and its wage system require racism to divide the working class and to maximize super-profits by exploiting some workers more than others. They can even see that multi-racial unity is possible to fight racism and unite the working class for revolutionary change.

At my school, a teacher of some white privilege ideas invited some PLP students to give a presentation in his class. A useful discussion led to the professor's participation in continuing discussions about class society and the need and potential to unite the working class against this racist system.

A friend of the Party

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS THAT CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION:Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly (UK)

US aims in Iraq need guns

Beneath these machinations lies a fundamental dilemma for the Bush administration. While desiring the appearance of democracy for domestic and international purposes, it is afraid to surrender authority. Its problem is that a free Iraq is unlikely to implement the U.S. agenda: a secular state, permanent military bases, American direction of the oil industry, a privatized economy and a foreign policy consonant with Washington's. (Newsday, 4/5)

Kerry backs Bush on Iraq

Mr. Kerry was short on specifics, however, when asked what he would do were he president….

He found himself defending the president's stay-the-course approach in Iraq….

Mr. Kerry came under attack from the left….

"You said, 'Stay the course,' but what the U.S. is doing is bombing hospitals, bombing mosques, killing hundreds of civilians," Mr. Daum said. "Is that the criminal course you want to stay? It's an imperialist country fighting an imperialist war….

As several people in the audience hooted in support, Mr. Kerry answered: "I have consistently been critical of how we got where we are…."

"I want the Americans out!" Mr. Daum shouted.

"Yes, and I want the Americans out —" Mr. Kerry started.

"No you don't, you say, 'Stay the course!" Mr. Daum shouted again.

"Stay the course of leaving a stable Iraq," Mr. Kerry said. (NYT, 4/15)

Keeping millions in prison

Not only do all 50 states continue to punish and marginalize convicts after they leave jail, but most also have laws that punish millions for crimes for which they were never convicted….

Thirty-seven states permit prospective employers and all state licensing agencies to ask about and weigh arrests that never led to conviction….

One of the most damaging laws withholds highway funds from states that do not punish drug offenders by suspending their driver's licenses….

[In] many states….those who leave prison in desperate need of jobs cannot legally drive to work, to school or to drug treatment programs….

This country…traps ex-offenders at the margins of society and forces them back into prison. (NYT, 4/6)

Liberals want bigger war

It is past time for the president to let go of Mr. Rumsfeld's flawed theories of war and authorize a real long-term increase in the force in Iraq….

As…for greater international military assistance, it would be folly to count on more than symbolic help in the near future. Any real increase in the military force in Iraq will have to come from the United States….

We may, in the end, find that the task…is simply impossible to achieve. But we have not reached that point. This is not the moment for retreat and it certainly is not the moment for half measures. (NYT editorial, 4/25)

Workers saw deaths coming

ATLANTIC CITY, April 22 — The garage collapse that killed four construction workers and injured 20 others last October during a $245 million expansion of the Tropicana Casino and Resort was caused by…changes…made to the design to speed the job and save money….

Laborers also reported troublesome-looking cracks in the concrete. But George Tolson, one of the Fabi laborers who noticed this condition, said he was told to keep working.

"All they wanted," said David R. Hand, 33, a laborer for Fabi who was pouring the concrete "is to go faster, faster, faster. Time is money. That was it." (NYT, 4/25)

Memories of A World War 2 Childhood in Britain

We could see thin traces of the airplanes making fine, lazy patterns in the blue sky, intertwining with one another. We children watched from the playground of Southport's Methodist School. It was May, 1941. Southport is a seaside town 12 miles north of Liverpool, where my family had come because my father was stationed with the Royal Navy there. The Nazis wanted to bomb Liverpool, an industrial port from which British cargo ships sailed to re-supply the Russian Front at Murmansk. Ships also arrived from North America with grain and other foodstuffs.

Rationing was still strict. We lived in a boarding house with one kitchen-sitting room and two tiny bedrooms. We could hear the sounds of bombing to the south. One day school was dismissed early. When we came to school the next day there was a downed British Hurricane fighter plane smashed against the children's bicycle shed, filling most of the playground. We all pretended it was German and ran 'round chanting, "Down with Hitler," and banged the plane's sides. It took several months to clear the playground but our schooling continued.

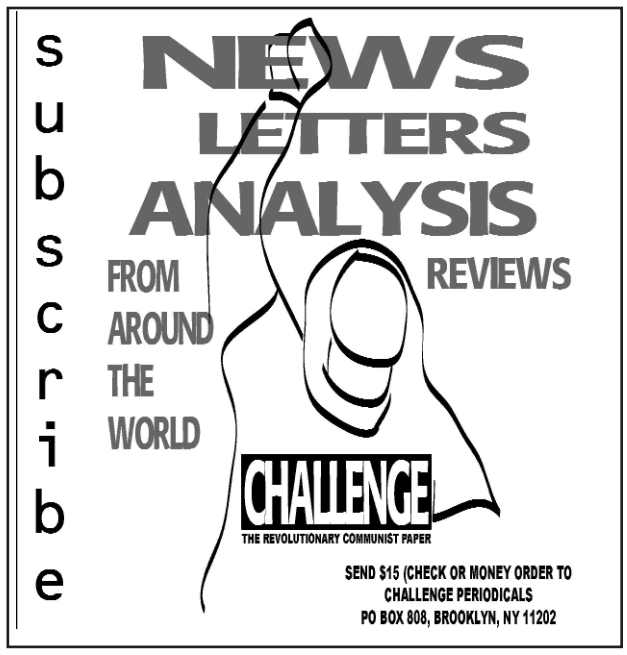
In our one room where my mother, brother and I did everything, I stood on the arm of our only threadbare couch, glued to the radio atop the cupboard, listening for reports about the crashed plane in our playground. The radio reported bombs being dropped that wouldn't explode immediately. We kids called these landmines. (Later, back in London, we children were beating on the side of a landmine, pretending to take on the Germans, when an air raid warden screamed at us to get away. The bomb was later detonated.)

One Saturday our family was strolling on Lord Avenue, Southport's main street, to have tea and buns with a lovely pink icing at the Kardomah Tea Shop. Suddenly the air raid siren sounded. We all ran crazily to hide. An airplane came crashing down on Lord Avenue's northern end, a few hundred yards away.

Life was full of daily and nightly fears in a non-occupied country during World War II and was very unpredictable. We were worried about my father. Every night I went to bed praying that God would end the war. But He didn't. With so much death around, I found it increasingly difficult to believe there was a supreme being. Things looked gray. Some months later an American cousin in the US Air Force stationed nearby visited us. He brought some Libby's fruit cocktail. I shall never forget the half pink cherry, a shining light in an awful sea of grayness.

The radio reported Nazi armies overrunning Yugoslavia, moving into Greece, and soon to take Crete. We heard Malta was being bombed nightly and that the Nazis had chased the British back from Libya, deep into Egypt. Then in early 1943 came the amazing news that the Soviet Army had smashed the Nazi army at Stalingrad and the British were chasing the Nazis out of Egypt at El Alamein. Maybe there could be an end to the war. I felt that if there was a God, He would be on the side of Uncle Joe Stalin and the Red Army.

Unbeknownst to me at the time, a San Francisco group of gospel singers, the Golden Gate Quartet, recorded a number called "Stalin Wasn't Stallin'." Later Bob Hope recorded it also, praising the fighting strength of the Red Army and Uncle Joe Stalin. Unity between capitalist America and the red Soviet Union seemed to be robust then. This, however, was merely the external appearance. ✪



1990's Union Give-backs Rob Workers' Health, Pensions Today

NEW YORK CITY, April 26 — The billions of dollars U.S. bosses are spending on the war in Iraq to maintain control of Mid-East oil are not only killing thousands of Iraqis and hundreds of U.S. GIs, but also workers and others at home. The huge cuts in social services to help pay for the war are adding one other casualty: the health and pension funds of 117,000 NYC hospital workers in Local 1199-SEIU. Private hospitals owe $130 million to employee benefit and pension funds. (New York Times, 4/14) This is threatening workers with loss of health insurance and other benefits, and thousands of layoffs.

While the hospitals complain of being squeezed by mounting competition, cost-cutting insurance companies, decreasing government payments and a sour economy, they and the HMO's made billions in profits over the past ten years that didn't go to workers' healthcare.

Citing this financial "squeeze," the bosses will demand that we give back wages and benefits we struck to win, when our contract expires on April 30, 2005.

In 1994, the National Benefit Fund was over-funded by $70 million. The union granted the bosses a temporary reduction in employer contributions, which they used to pay for other benefits, like the so-called job guarantees.

In 1998, the National Pension Fund was over-funded by $200 million, and again New York State posted a budget surplus. Again, the union diverted Pension Fund "surpluses" to finance contract demands. From 1994-1998, the bosses saved millions of dollars by these rate reductions.

Capitalist health care, based on profits first, workers last — and ignoring preventative measures — cannot meet the needs of workers and patients to assure health care for all . . .

The Benefit and Pension Fund surpluses were based mainly on investments during the stock market boom. But stocks that go up inevitably come down. When the recession popped the stock market bubble, union give-backs turned $270 million surpluses into a $130 million "shortfall." The pension fund was supposed to be the workers' money. The chickens are coming home to roost.

The health care crisis will cause misery, pain and suffering to the working class. Thousands of hospital jobs, rehabilitation and home healthcare services face reduction or elimination.

There is an especially racist aspect to these attacks since most NYC healthcare workers are black, Latin and Asian. Massive racist layoffs and cuts in healthcare will cause greater disease. This, on top of the three million uninsured workers in NYC, will wreak havoc on the health of the working class.

Capitalist health care, based on profits first-workers last, and ignoring preventive measures, cannot meet the needs of workers and patients. Only communism, with no bosses, profits or exploitation, will assure health care for all in an anti-racist healthcare system. ✪

NFL Poster Boy For Imperialist War

Pat Tillman, who left a multimillion-dollar National Football League career to join the Army Rangers, was killed during a clash with the Taliban-Al Qaeda forces in Afghanistan. The Bush Administration and the media now portray Tillman as the "ultimate" patriot who sacrificed" everything for his country. But the fact is that Tillman — along with over 700 soldiers who have died in Iraq and many others in Afghanistan — are victims of a lying ruling class who uses them to protect the profits of Halliburton, Exxon-Mobil, JP Morgan, Citibank, & Co.

Motivated by the 9/11 attacks, Tillman abandoned his pro-football career to join the army, thinking the U.S. was fighting a war on terror. First he was sent to Iraq, then later to Afghanistan. He believed Saddam was linked to al Qaeda in the 9/11 terror attacks. But it has been proven that the only "connection" between them is that they were once both darlings of his beloved CIA, who also trained Tillman. (See front page on the real reasons why Iraq was invaded.)

U.S. rulers will use Tillman's death to lead more working-class youth to their graves as the bosses try to maintain control of the oil-rich Middle East. A year ago the Bush Administration tried to fabricate the bravery of Private Jessica but was caught when she denied their story.

It's difficult for the bosses to find poster boys — or girls — for U.S. imperialism, given the death and destruction it wreaks, which is why they're pushing Tillman, someone who willingly gave up money and fame. But they've got an uphill battle. A system based on a culture of extreme egotism, racism, lies, exploitation and anti-communism doesn't inspire too many people. ✪